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RESEARCH ARTICLE

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG RURAL STUDENTS IN LEARNING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

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Abstract

Social media has brought about a revolution in the learning process. Effective use of social media not only enhances learning processes, it offers wide range to explore more. It cut-across all spheres of learning development providing wide array of opportunity to learn at low cost. Learning of English language is now wide open for any learners, anytime through social media. In spite of these advantages, rural students were left behind due to their remoteness and other various constraints. The present study focuses on the frequency of using social media among the rural students; understanding the purpose of social media for learning English language; and problems related to efficient use. The study reveals that rural students were able to use social media for learning English language up to a certain extent but unable to use it effectively and efficiently.

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Introduction:-

Access to social media has become a necessity today. For students, social media is an integral part of their learning. Apart from providing collaborative learning, networking and connectivity, social media also provides various ways of sharing and generating knowledge and contents. Li (2017) puts that we should welcome the new era of learning with social media without worrying but with precaution. She found that students effectively use their favourite social media channel for exchange of knowledge in order to facilitate a valuable quality in learning. The crucial role of social media in teaching-learning process has extended beyond the target expectation. Use of social media is now diversified. It cut- across different aspects of life. It is comprehensive, covering wide area of different prospects. Use of social media in learning new languages is an emerging evolution. Dhanya (2016) reflect on the use of social media that it encourages user to engage with information in English language skills both formally and informally as well as it bridge to facilitate communication both inside and outside the classroom. Use of social media in learning of English language continues to rise and dominate the rest. Henceforth, it is obvious that a techno-savvy teacher as well as student will have greater chances of availing these emerging media deftly.

Different studies point towards the fact that social media provides immense flexibility and varied features to master English language. A study conducted by Khan, Ayaz and Farhan (2016) on the role of social media in development of English Language vocabulary at university level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa concluded that social media facilitates to learn new words and it arouse learners' interest for longer period. Puspa (2018) pointed out that the feature of 'sharing' in social media is one of the most beneficial facilities to provide materials related to learning English with mates. The study also concluded that 'the more often the use of social media with English then the higher the value of a person's GPA'. Al Muburak (2016) in his study on learning of English as a second language through social media in Saudia Arabia concludes that use of social media helps the student to improve English language proficiency.

'Use of Electronic media is gaining popularity and youth devote much of their time and skills which is opening new channel for change' (Sumanth, 2014). While use of social media grew rapidly, hardly a few researches were conducted among the rural students in India to measure its impact. It could be due to fact that the rural areas remain aloof from the rest of the country because of its remoteness. From inability to afford the electronic gadgets to poor connectivity and irregular power supply, rural students lag far behind with the rest. Bansal (2015) on impact of social media in rural India reminds that importance of social media shouldn't influence the people in a way that alienates them from real potentials. Social media comes along with new perspective for development and social responsibilities which need to be understood vividly. Now that rural students have access to social media to a certain extent, the present study is an attempt to understand how these students were able to use social media in learning of English language.

The main objectives of the study was to find out how often does rural students used social media for learning English language purposes, how were they benefitted from using the media and problems related to the use of social media.

Methodology and Data Collection:-

The present study was based on descriptive method. The data were collected from rural students of Makhan villages located 90 Km away from Imphal, the capital city of Manipur. Makhan consists of 5(five) recognised and 3(three) unrecognised villages belonging to Mao tribe under Tadubi Sub-division of Senapati District. Makhan have a population of 7,448 as per 2011 census. People of Makhan are known as Okhramei or Ekhramei (Descendants of Khrasi) and they speak Mao or Emela language.

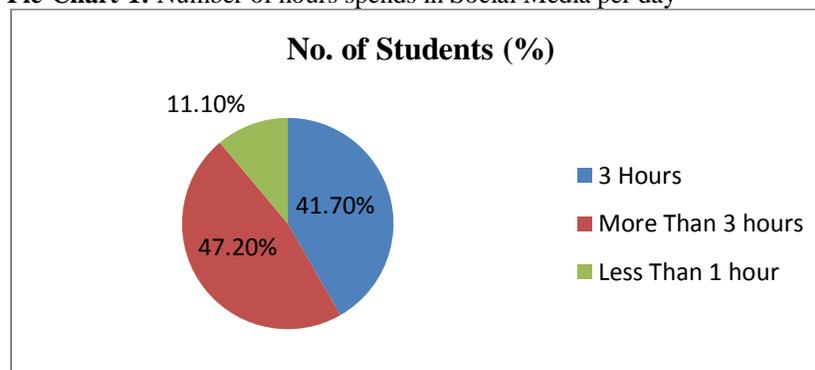
The data were collected randomly from the students of Makhan pursuing different academic courses. The present data were collected through a questionnaire prepared by the researcher using docs.google.com. The questionnaire contains questions relating to purpose, benefits and problem of using social media. The researcher received 45 responses altogether but due to incomplete information, only 36 responses were used for data analysis. It may be noted that there were around 300 students of Makhan villages pursuing 10+2 level and above, but it was found out that only few were using social media; therefore, the sample size was relatively small.

The data collected were analysed using percentages. Out of 36 students, 58.3% (21) of the respondents were male and 41.7% (15) of the respondents were female. The respondents were of the age group between 18-29 years, out of which most of the respondents were between the age-group of 21-26 years. 41.7% of the respondents were pursuing postgraduate, 41.7% were pursuing under graduate courses and only 5.6 % of them were in 10+2 level. The respondents were from various streams-Arts (50%), General Science (22.2%), Medical (8.3%), Commerce (2.8%), Engineering (2.8%), others (13.9%). 58.3% of their parents were cultivator by occupation, 19% were government employee, 8.3% were into business and 13.9% belongs to others or unspecified occupation.

Findings and Discussions:-

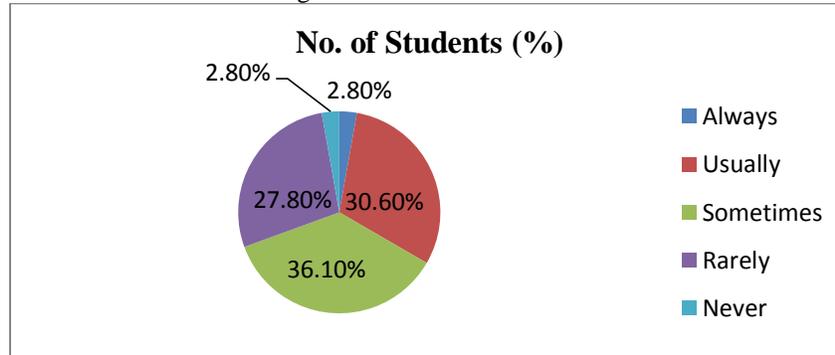
Purpose of using Social Media:-

Pie-Chart-1: Number of hours spends in Social Media per day



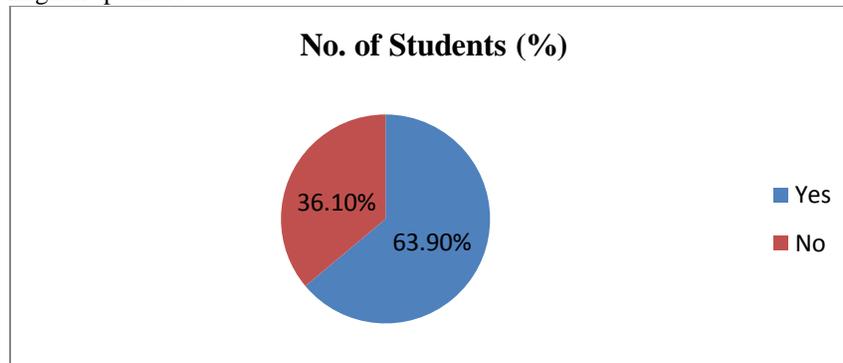
The data in the Pie-chart reveals that 41.7% spends more than 3 hours in social media like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram etc. while 47.2% spends between 1-3 hours and 11.1% spends less than 1 hour daily. The data clearly indicates that most of the rural students were spending quite a lot time in social media.

Pie-Chart-2:- Data showing number of students who use Social Media to learn English language



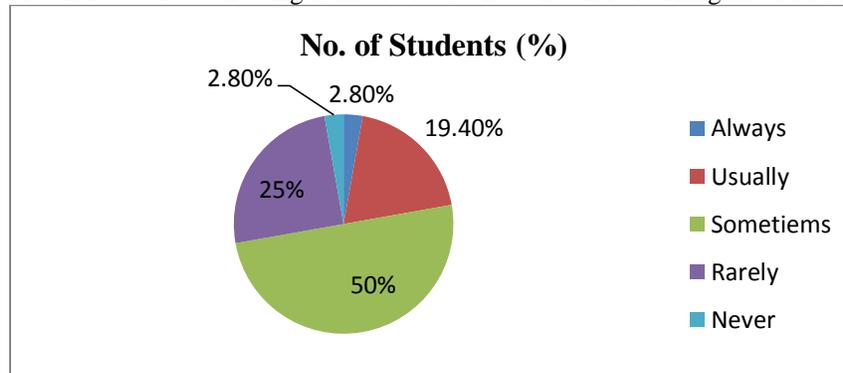
The data in the Pie-Chart shows that only 2.80% use social media always to learn English language, 30.6% use social media usually to learn English language, while 36.1% uses sometimes and 27.80% uses rarely. 2.80% never uses social media in learning of English language. The data clearly indicates that students were able to use social media for learning English language purpose though many do not use it often.

Pie-Chart-3:- Data showing the number of students who use social media to interact with native English speakers



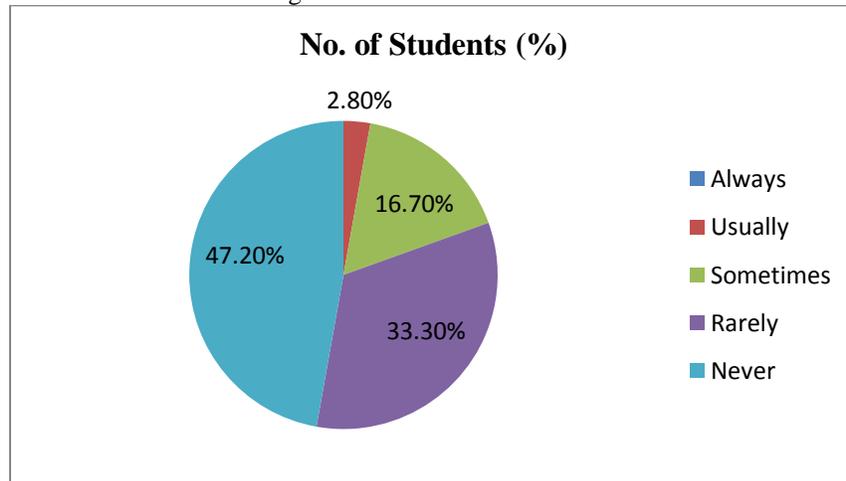
The data in the Pie-chart highlights that 63.90% were able to interact with native English speakers through social media while 36.10% were not able to do so. This finding could mean that most of the students were trying to learn outside the classroom through the help of native speakers whom they make friends in social media.

Pie-chart-4:- Data showing number of students who share learning material using social media



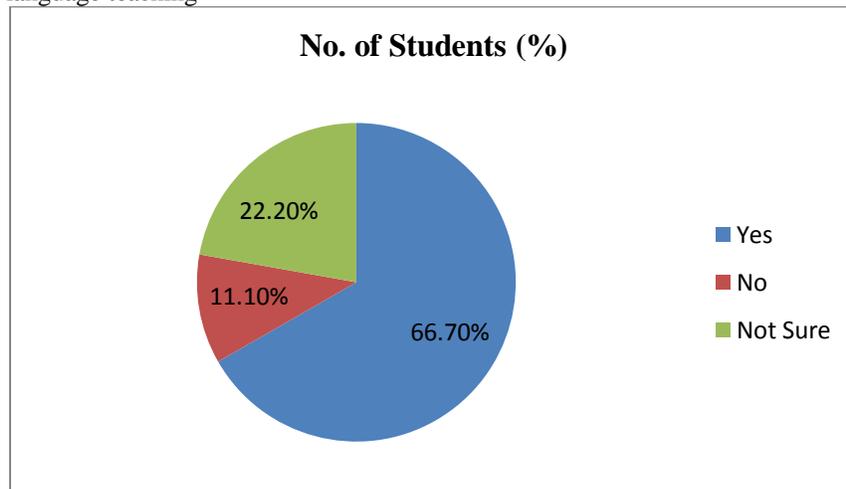
The data indicates that 2.80% always use social media to share learning material while 19.4% usually use to share learning material, 50% of them use to share learning material with their friends sometimes, 25% of the students rarely and 2.8% never shares.

Pie-Chart-5: Data showing number of students who use Social media to contact their teachers.



The data reveals that only 2.8% uses social media usually to contact their teachers, 16.7% uses sometimes, while 33.3% rarely uses and 47.2% never use it. This finding could mean that there was not good relationship between the students and teachers through social media.

Pie-Chart-6:-Data showing number of students who want to recommend social media in English language teaching

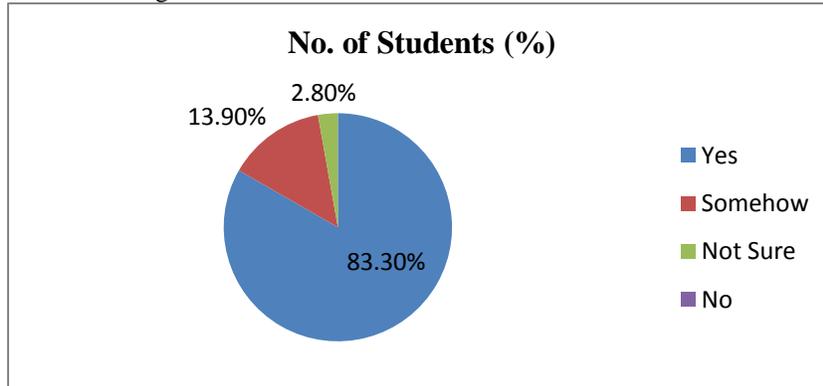


The data indicates that 66.7% wants to recommend social media in English language teaching while 11.1% says it would not be required and 22.2% were not sure whether to recommend or not.

The data indicates that most of the students knew the importance of using social media and to certain extent they were able to make the best use. However, the data clearly indicates that most of them were unable to use it efficiently for learning purposes. It can be noted that less than 50% of them used it for learning of English language. It was rather disappointing to note that there weren't good communication between teachers and students through social media which clearly points that social media was not used to teach English language by teachers. Nevertheless, it was encouraging to note that many respondents were using social media to learn English by interacting with other English speakers. As most of the students recommend social media in teaching English language, it clearly signalled that there need to be a shift from traditional classroom teaching to a more flexible approach.

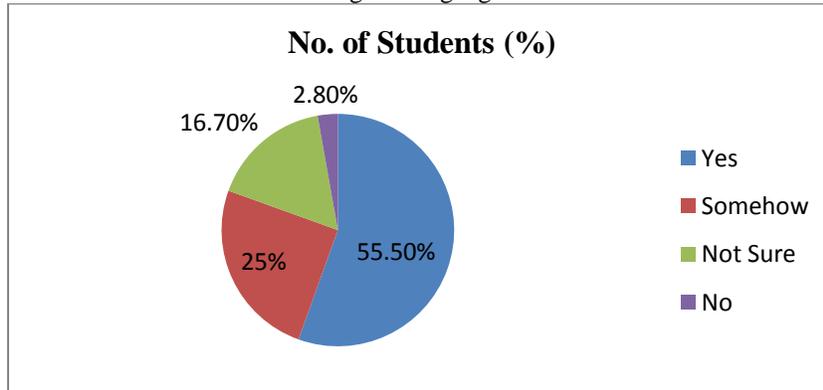
Benefits of Using Social Media:-

Pie-Chart 7:-Data showing the number of students whether social media helps them in gaining more knowledge



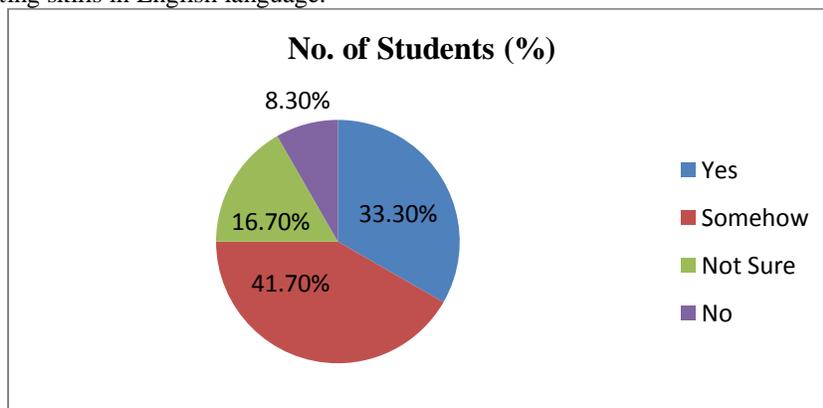
The data in the pie-chart indicates that 83.3% feels social media helps them in gaining more knowledge while 13.9% says that somehow they could gain more knowledge and 2.8% says that they were not so sure.

Pie-Chart 8:-Data representing number of students whether social media helps them to improve their communication skills in English language



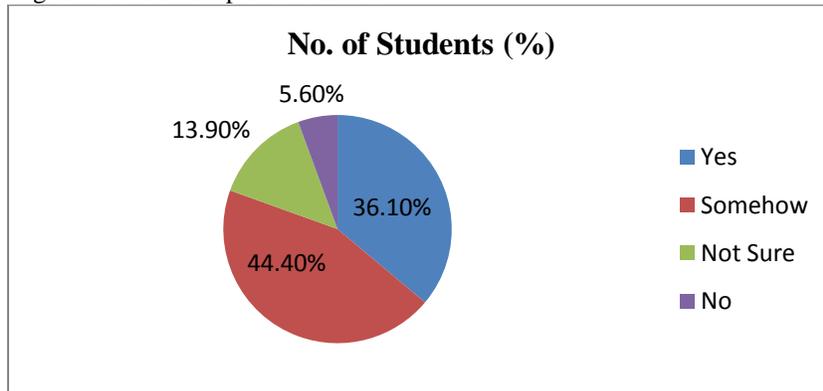
The data indicates that 55.6% of the respondent says that use of social media helps them to improve their communication skills in English, 25% says somehow, 16.7% not very sure, and 2.8% says it does not help them at all.

Pie-Chart 9: Data showing number of students whether social media helps them in improving their writing skills in English language.



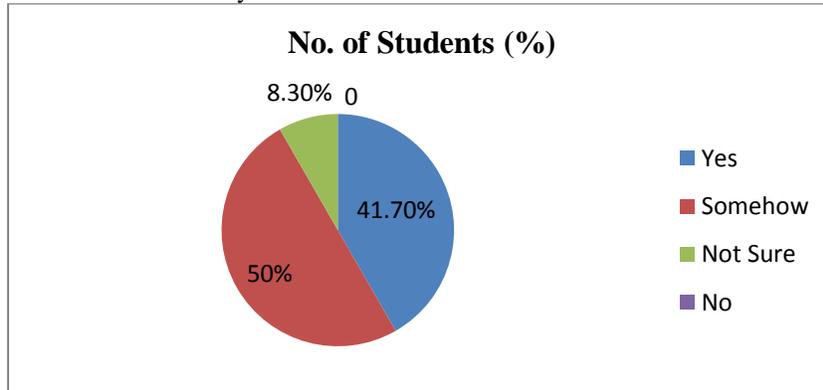
The data reveals that 33.3% of the students feel that use of social media helps them to improve their writing skills in English language while 41.7% says somehow it helps them, 16.7% were not sure whether it helps them and 8.3% says that it does not help them at all.

Pie-Chart 10: Data showing number of students whether social media helps them to speak English with correct pronunciation.



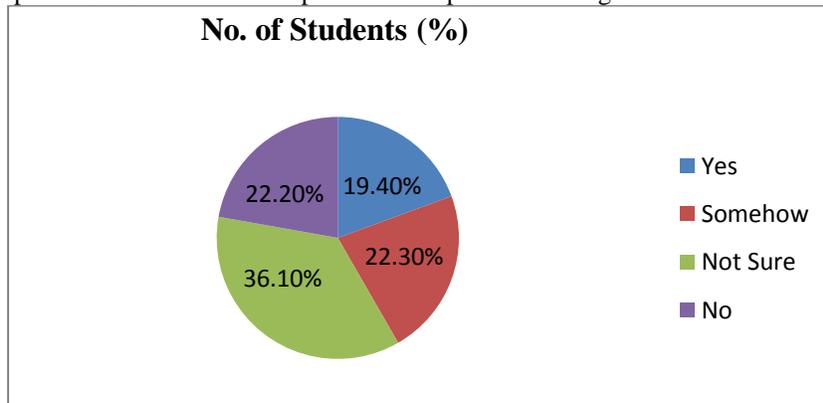
The inferences from the chart shows that 36.1% feels that use of social media helps them to speak English with correct pronunciation, while 44.4% of the respondent feels that somehow it helps them to speak English with correct pronunciation, 13.9% of them were not sure and 5.6% says that it didn't helps them at all.

Pie-Chart 11:-Data showing number of students whether uses of social media helps them to enrich their vocabulary.



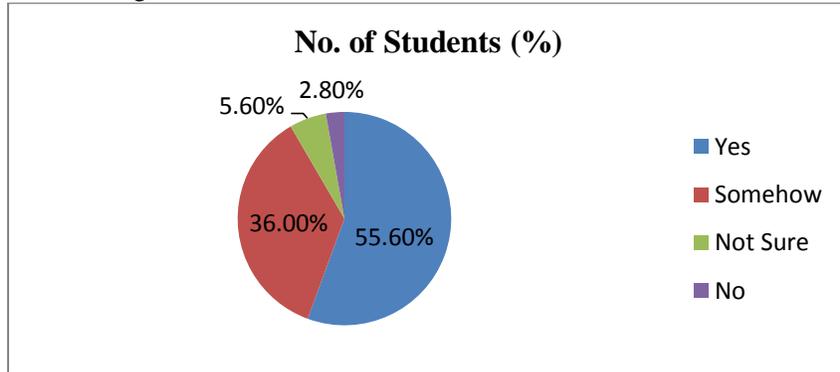
The data indicates that 41.7% were of the opinion that use of social media helps them in enriching their vocabularies and 50% says somehow and 8.3% says that they were not sure.

Pie-Chart 12:-Data showing number of students whether chatting with other foreign English speakers in social media helps them to improve their English accent.



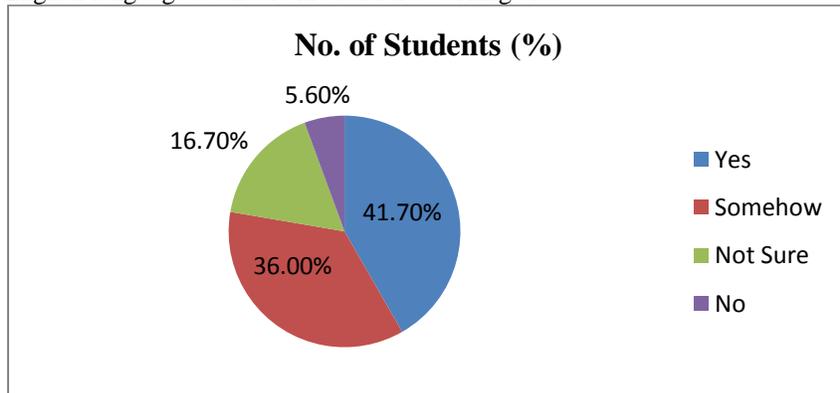
The data indicates that 19.4% feels chatting with other foreign English speakers in social networking helps them to improve their English accent, 22.2% says somehow, 36.1% says they were not sure and 22.2% haven't chat with other foreign English speakers.

Pie-Chart 13:-Data showing number of students whether reading in social media helps them in silent reading



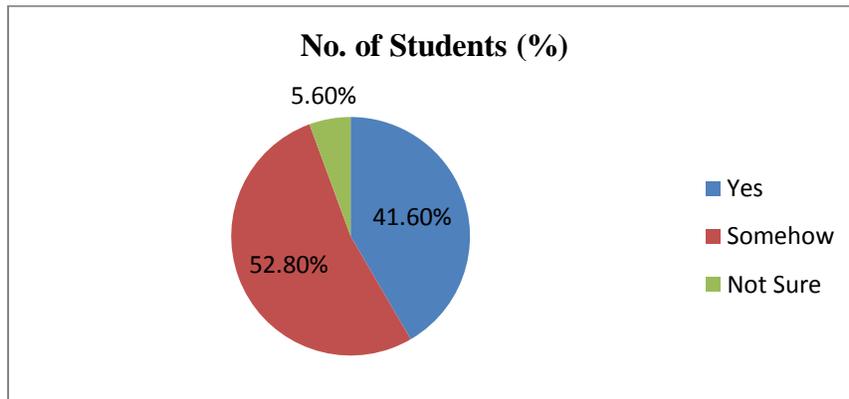
The data indicates that 55.6% feels reading in social media helps them to improve their silent reading skills and 36.1% says somehow. The data also shows that 5.6% were not sure and 2.8% says that they were not aware.

Pie-Chart 14:-Data showing the number of students in regard to use of tutorials on learning English language available in social networking sites.



The data indicates that 41.7% feels tutorials on learning English language available in social networking sites help them in their academic learning. The data also indicates that 36% feels somehow it helps them while 16.7% were not sure and 5.6% were not aware.

Pie-Chart 15:-Data showing the use of YouTube videos in learning English language among the student



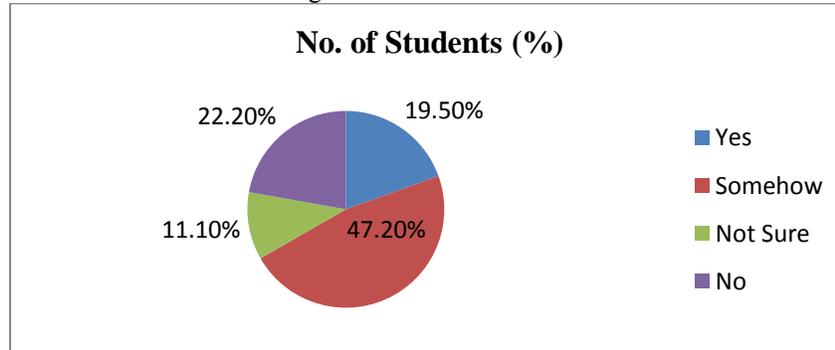
The data indicates that 41.6% of the students were of the opinion that YouTube videos helps them to clear their doubts in learning English language, while 52.8% says somehow and 5.6% says that it didn't help them to clarify.

It was clear from the present data that students were benefitted from the use of social media in the learning of English language. They could improve their language skills, communication skills, enrich their vocabularies, learn

correct pronunciation, and clear their doubts using social media. This could be an implication for those students who were unable to discover these advantages of using social media to learn English language.

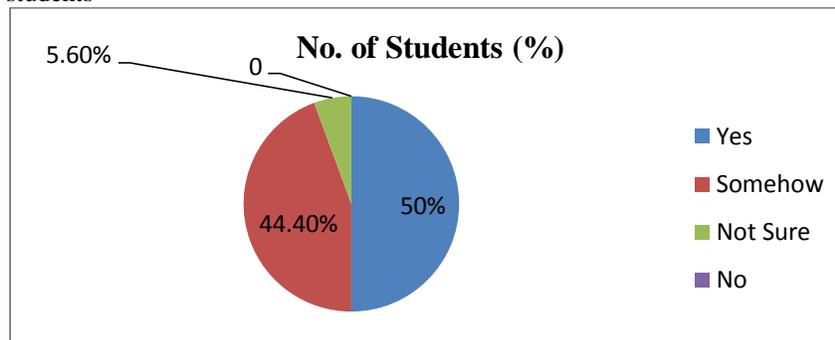
Problems related to using of Social Media:-

Pie-Chart 16:- Data showing whether use of social media disturbs students’ daily activities



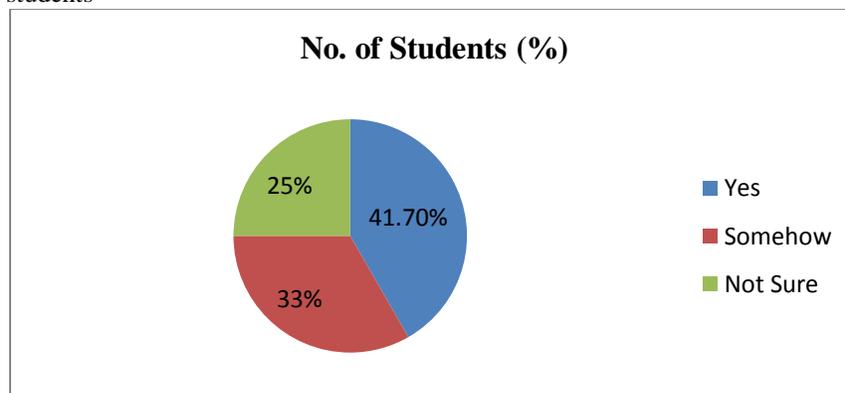
The data shows that 19.5% students were disturbed in their daily activities because of the use of social media. 47.2% says somehow, 11.1% says they were not sure, and 22.2% says that it didn’t disturb them.

Pie-Chart 17:-Data showing whether use of social media continuously affects the eyesight of the students

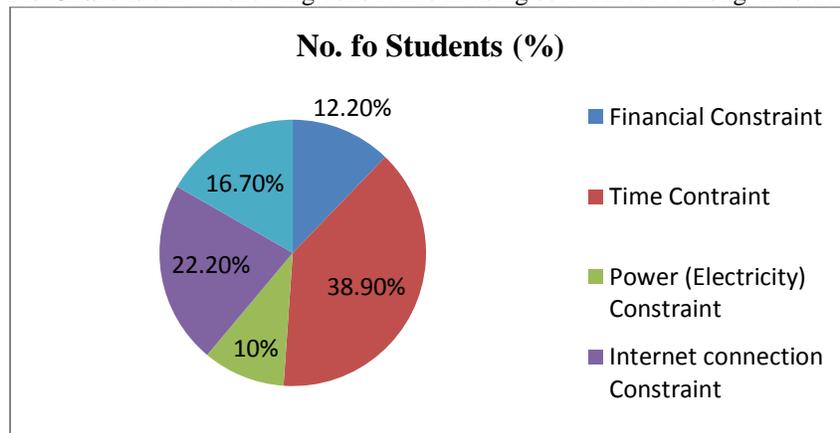


The data indicates that 50% of the student feels prolonged use of social media affects their eyesight, 44.4% says somehow and 5.6% says they weren’t sure. Students should limit themselves from staring digital devices for long periods as it can lead to sore, irritated and dry eyes, headaches and fatigues which could affect their overall health in the long run. Precautionary measures such as using anti-glare screen protector, adjusting the brightness and splashing your eyes with water from time to time would help reduce the health risks.

Pie-Chart 18:-Data showing whether use of social media affects the sleep timing among the students



The data indicates that 41.7% of the student’s sleep timings were affected, 33.3% says that somehow their sleep timings were affected and 25% says it does not affect their sleep timings.

Pie-Chart 19:-Data showing constraints in using social media among the students

The chart indicates that 12.2% faces financial constraints, 38.9% of the students says that they have time constraints, 10% faces power (electricity) constraints, 22.2% says they have internet connection problem, 16.7% says that they have financial constraint, time constraint, irregular electricity supply and internet connection problem.

Most of the students were of the view that excessive use of social media disturbs their daily activities, disturb their sleep timings and affects their eyesight. Financial constraints, irregular power supply, internet connection problem and time adjustment continues to hampers the efficient use of social media to learn English language. Students should be aware and learn how to limit themselves from excessive use of digital device.

Conclusion:-

The study has brought forth the essence of using social media in the learning of English language among the rural students. It can be concluded that use of social media in learning of English language is gaining its prominence among the rural students. Though most of the students in rural areas were unable to use it effectively, it was heartening to note that most of the students have put their effort. It was sad to note that many were yet to avail the facilities due to various impediments. The Government should launch special schemes to help those rural students who were unable to have access due to poverty and backwardness. Knowing the fact that social media has multi-facet in educational process, digital learning should be introduced in rural schools at the earliest. Parents and guardians should be sensitised about these new advancement so that it can be well-regulated and monitored from any misuse. Teachers and stakeholders should take advantage of this media to facilitate and make teaching more effective. In a race for equity and equality, rural students shouldn't be deprived of quality education by any man-made obstruction.

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